More Genres of Film

Coyote vs. Acme: From Canceled to Comic-Con!

by Jamie Lee • 4 months ago

Coyote vs. Acme has a history worthy of its own Looney Tunes short. In *Coyote vs. Acme*, Wile E. Coyote, after decades of having malfunctioning Acme products literally blow up in his face as he pursues the Road Runner, sues the Acme corporation for their faulty products. If you know the film's history, skip the next paragraph. For the rest of you, here's a (literal) crash course in *Coyote vs. Acme*…

Coyote vs. Acme was announced in 2018, filmed (in and around the Looney Tunes' often-referenced Albuquerque!) in 2022, bumped from an HBO Max exclusive to a summer 2023 theatrical release, screened multiple times for test audiences who gave it quite high ratings, completely finished and ready for marketing, merchandising, and release… and then delayed to make room for *Barbie* (2023) on the release schedule. (We almost had "Acmeheimer"! … Although, do we really want atomic bombs made by Acme?) Then, it was canceled to be potentially used as a tax write-off, was un-canceled after huge protests from fans and filmmakers (and those who are both) to be pitched and sold to other studios…and had various conflicting reports about what was going on behind the scenes of that sale. Finally, on March 31, 2025 (just barely avoiding sounding like a cruel April Fools' joke), independent distributor Ketchup Entertainment (who bought the rights for and distributed *The Day the Earth Blew Up: A Looney Tunes Movie* (2024)) successfully bought full rights to the film, meaning I can now refer to *Coyote vs. Acme* as…*Coyote vs. Acme* (2026)!

Specifically, *Coyote vs. Acme* is crashing into theaters globally on August 28, 2026!

So, why the wait for a film that's completely finished? My thoughts are that it's probably to ensure a solid marketing campaign. As much as I (and others, based on reviews and streaming numbers) loved *The Day the Earth Blew Up: A Looney Tunes Movie*, even now, when I bring it up to people, most of them have no idea it even exists, much less came out in theaters.

To kick off Ketchup Entertainment's official marketing campaign (in some ways, the marketing unofficially started when the film was initially canceled in 2023), stars of and filmmakers behind *Coyote vs. Acme* took over one of the most high-profile stages: Hall H at San Diego Comic-Con 2025! The panel's audience filled all 7,000 seats in the hall.

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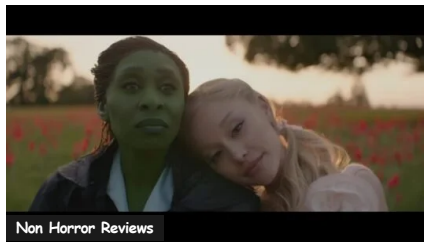
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To borrow a term from Wile E. Coyote…"Genius."

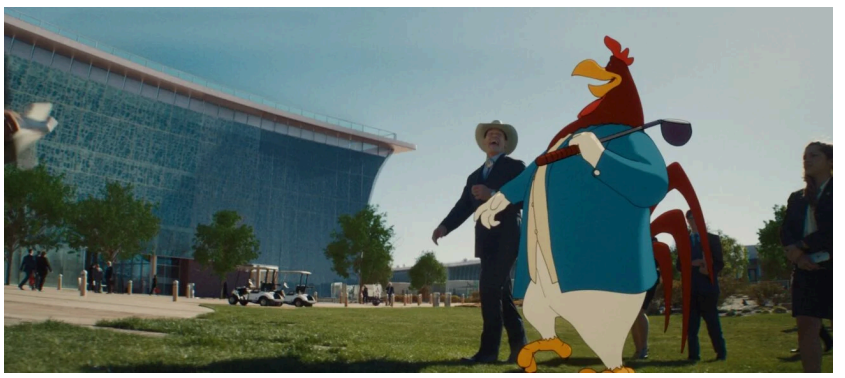
The panel, hosted by Paul Scheer, included director Dave Green and cast members Eric Bauza, Will Forte, and Martha Kelly. Cast members Candi Milo and Steven Ray Byrd were also in attendance. Scheer kicked off the panel by showing the direction Ketchup is heading with their marketing…thankfully, they're leaning into the film's history and calling it the film "Acme doesn't want you to see." ("For legal purposes," it's the movie *Acme* doesn't want you to see. No other corporation.)

Coyote vs. Acme's cast so far includes: Eric Bauza and Candi Milo as several Looney Tunes characters, some of whom are still under wraps (Wile E. Coyote remains his silent self in the film.); Will Forte as Kevin Avery, Wile E. Coyote's lawyer; Lana Condor as Paige Avery, Kevin's niece; John Cena as Buddy Crane, an Acme lawyer; Martha Kelly as Dottie Jones; P.J. Byrne as Bill Pelicanos, an Acme lawyer; Tone Bell as Tyrone Maltese; and Luis Guzmán as a judge.

The panel screened two clips from the film. The first showed Wile E. Coyote lamenting memories, shown as clips from Looney Tunes cartoons, of failure after failure, underscored by Johnny Cash's cover of Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt." Then, Kevin Avery's (Will Forte) commercial for his law firm comes on TV, asking, "Have you ever pulled the ripcord of your parachute and only silverware comes out? It's not your fault." His law firm? Avery, Jones, and Maltese: named after Looney Tunes legends Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, and Michael Maltese, who all brought classic Looney Tunes shorts to life (In fact, Jones and Maltese created Wile E. Coyote).

The second, a six-minute scene, showed early court proceedings, with Buddy Crane (John Cena) a smooth, strong, suave, and smarmy presence in the courtroom, Avery fumbling, nervous and out of practice (law pun intended), a couple of Looney cameos, and Luis Guzmán's judge using a cartoon gavel…that squeaks. Later, Avery gets a phone call from an anonymous source offering to help with the case…an anonymous source with a very familiar Brooklyn accent… *Doc*…

The panel revealed that, similar to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, there are quite a few Looney Tunes characters peppered throughout the film in both major and cameo roles. This isn't a story of "the Looney Tunes broke out into the real world," it's "the Looney Tunes are part of the world, and you could run into them on the street like any other actor." One big (literally and figuratively) reveal was when Acme's head honcho Zoom called into the panel, and I say…



"I say, I say, boy, when I'm not , I'm a-runnin' Acme!" (Image courtesy of Ketchup Entertainment)

I was personally quite thrilled to have it confirmed that Looney Tunes' recurring mad scientist character, modeled after the legendary Peter Lorre, has a significant role in the film. As a Looney Tunes fan and horror fan, the crossover section of the Venn diagram is me. I was also personally thrilled at the confirmation that Daffy Duck is in the film.

The panel also featured surprise appearances by Wile E. Coyote (Perhaps a reference to the anonymous fan who protested *Coyote vs. Acme*'s cancellation outside "Acme" in full Wile E. Coyote garb?) and Acme lawyer Bill Pelicanos (P.J. Byrne) trying to shut down the panel by serving cease and desist papers and escorting the panelists offstage with the help of some Acme paralegals and unpaid Acme interns before the official trailer could be shown…

…Only for Will Forte to sprint back onstage, grab a microphone, yell, "Run the

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trailer!", and bolt off stage left, with an Acme intern hot on his heels as the trailer began.

The trailer has not yet been officially released. When it is, check back here!

Cast member Steven Ray Byrd attended the panel and shared an exclusive picture of the poster he received, signed by cast members and director Dave Green…

This film will make quite the *impact!* (Image courtesy of Steven Ray Byrd)

Now, about that *Coyote vs. Acme* (2026) backstory…

When the film was initially canceled, "#ReleaseCoyoteVsAcme" trended on social media. I was even part of it on Twitter, creating my own thread that I added to almost every day for…a while…(I may or may not have also used some other avenues to get my voice out there as well.)

X (FORMERLY TWITTER)

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Others who are directly involved in the film also contributed to the hashtag. Cast members Eric Bauza, Steven Ray Byrd, and Will Forte, director Dave Green, editors Carsten Kurpanek and Ned Thorne, composer Steven Price, and set dresser BMar were among the many, many people who contributed to the hashtag.

As previously established on this very site, I'm a huge, lifelong, loyal Looney Tunes fan. So much so, it took me a long time to realize that, apparently, that's "weird." That many people see a black duck next to a certain shield logo and say, "Oh! Donald!"

I do not understand these people.

My face when people call Tweety Bird "she." (Image courtesy of Ketchup Entertainment)

Next year, Daffy Duck and his *Looney* cohorts won't be standing next to that familiar shield. The Looney Tunes will be standing next to ketchup. With August 28, 2026, being the global release, rather than country by country, maybe the aforementioned people can finally get their ducks in a row (pun intended) and "ketchup" to the rest of us.

The Looney Tunes have a long history of being underdogs fighting the powers at be for shreds of dignity. Whether said powers be a hunter, a fellow Looney Tunes character, or an animator, the Looney Tunes are used to getting crushed by anvil after anvil and blown up by dynamite after dynamite, but still getting up, even if they have piano keys for teeth and walk like an accordion. *Coyote vs. Acme* (2026) has certainly taken hit after hit and fallen off cliff after cliff, but if the relentless passion and dedication of the cast, crew, other filmmakers who've seen the film, and test audiences are anything to go by, we're in for a fun time in Albuquerque. (Just don't miss that left turn!)

Until then, I'll be covering *Coyote vs. Acme* right here as much as I can, including interviews, news coverage (such as trailer breakdowns), and reviewing the film when it finally crashes onto the big screen on August 28, 2026.

(Special thanks to Steven Ray Byrd for the exclusive picture of his poster!)

Just keep on "trucking" until we get there! (Image courtesy of Ketchup Entertainment)

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Jamie Lee's a writer, actor, singer, director, DJ (including hosting "Jammin' with Jamie"), and more in film, theatre, and radio. Jamie Lee Cortese, despite loving horror and comedy and being an actor and writer, is also not Jamie Lee Curtis, though she understands where you might get confused. Visit her website at http://jamieleecortese.com or find her on Twitter @JackalopeJamie.

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